

foister such Johnsonian ambitions as might be; and in furtherance of this admirable and self-sacrificing program it was the sincere desire of Heney to know which office Mr. Johnson desired. If Johnson decided to run for senator then Mr. Heney would run for governor; but if Johnson determined to run for governor then Heney would make the race for senator. All Heney yearned to know was the desire of Mr. Johnson.

Then it was Mr. Johnson's turn for pause. He did not think his candidate, Eschelman, could defeat Heney in the primaries for governor, and he had no intention of allowing Heney the chance of gaining control of the state organization. Heney announced officially that there appeared to be a misapprehension; that he would run for governor, and that Eschelman would run for lieutenant-governor, leaving the senatorial fight open to Mr. Heney—provided, of course, no other Progressive candidate appeared.

Oddly enough, it was not long before another Progressive candidate for the senatorship did appear, and that candidate was none other than Mr. Chester H. Rowell, an able editor—and, to all intents and purposes, Mr. Rowell was the candidate favored by Johnson. There was nothing public about this favoring business, of course. It was held to be a fight between two good men—and may the better one win; but privately it was held, and in that Rowell is the Johnson candidate, or, rather, the candidate favored by the Johnson organization. Such denials as there may be of this remark will come from the Johnsonites.

As it stands, it looks as though Rowell is the organization candidate—not machine, but organization; and Heney is the crusader candidate. This impression was strengthened not long ago by an editorial article in the San Francisco Bulletin, ardent in its championing of Heney. This editorial article was headed: *The Crisis of Roosevelt's Career*. It said, among other things:

"He"—meaning the Colonel—"will have to decide, and he will have the power to decide, whether the existing Progressive organization shall degenerate, like the older parties, into a machine for putting politicians into office, or whether it shall remain a movement to carry out certain principles, relinquishing immediate hope of victory if victory now has to be tainted with compromise."

This editorial article was three columns wide, in large type; and it said in another place:

"The gravest dangers of the Progressive Party are from within, not from without; and the gravest danger of all is typified by George W. Perkins. . . . Perkins is the apostle of the United States Steel Corporation and the International Harvester Company. He is furnishing money to the organization in return for a controlling voice in its politics and would like to remain on friendly terms with Colonel Roosevelt; but if he continues with the party it will cease to be a Progressive Party, and if Colonel Roosevelt runs on a platform satisfactory to Perkins he will cease to be a Progressive."

I am not informed as to the present status of Perkins with Governor Johnson, but Johnson ran on a platform satisfactory to Perkins two years ago; and when the Colonel returned from Spain he issued an endorsement of Perkins which appears to settle that opulent gentleman's position in the Progressive Party, so far as Roosevelt is concerned. As that statement read, the Colonel and Perkins remain in or go out together.

Inasmuch as the Bulletin is Heney's principal newspaper supporter, that would appear to separate the Johnson wing and the Heney wing—on the senatorship—rather widely; but perhaps not. The politicians in California say that Governor Johnson himself has a particularly ardent desire to have the Colonel mix in his affairs, for the reason that the Governor has an idea that in the course of events, inasmuch as he so gallantly carried the flag in 1912, in a secondary position, there might arise a situation in a future campaign—in 1916, say—when they would give him the first flag to carry. And he has a firm conviction that as a first-flag carrier he would make a great hit, especially if he is re-elected governor this year.

The story goes that Governor Johnson, though wishing the Colonel no harm, was much interested in the details of the lameness of the Colonel's lame larynx, and the consequent loss of the Colonel's appearance on the nation-wide stump. However, that may be merely gossip.

The main and interesting fact is that the Progressives in California, where they have been teamworkers heretofore, now have two candidates for senator; and the designation

of these two candidates as the machine candidate and the crusader candidate may not be so far amiss. So far, the contest is reasonably harmonious between these two in a public sense; but you never can tell—you never can tell!

Johnson will be renominated by the Progressives; he has no opposition. The primaries are to be held on August twenty-fifth; but Johnson is already campaigning, and he is one of the most effective campaigners in this country. His fight will come in the general election, when he will be opposed by a Democrat and a Republican.

There are five or six Democrats making campaigns for the Democratic nomination, but none of them is of more than local importance. There is a rather acute political opinion that Johnson will get considerable Democratic support. He went after President Wilson in his well-known vitriolic style—Johnson is always vitriolic, you understand—in one speech; but some of his friends are alleged to have advised him to refrain.

The man he will be compelled to beat will be the regular Republican nominee, and there are two men importantly in that race—William C. Ralston, formerly a state senator, and United States Subtreasurer for San Francisco for some years; and John W. Fredericks, of Los Angeles, who prosecuted the dynamiters and convicted them. Ralston is an old-line Republican, of a family long identified with San Francisco and California affairs, and is not only a good politician but an able and engaging man.

One of the features of this campaign is a constitutional amendment providing for state-wide prohibition. This is a dangerous issue, for the wine and affiliated industries of California represent several hundred million dollars of investment and the women of California will vote. Most of the candidates have side-stepped this issue, but Ralston is against it. Fredericks is a popular man and a good lawyer, and it is expected that either he or Ralston will be nominated.

With Johnson running, the gubernatorial situation is the important one, not only because Johnson is running but because of its direct bearing on the senatorial fight. Heney is as widely known in a national sense as Johnson—probably more widely known, for Heney was active in

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# THE GOOD PROVIDER

LIKE a suckling to the warmth of the mother, the township of Newton nestled pat against the flank of the city and drew from her through the arteries of electric trains and Interurbans, elevated roads and motor cars.

Such clots coagulate round the city in the form of Ferndales and Glen-coves, Yorkvilles and Newtons; and from them have sprung, full-grown, the joke paper and the electric lawn mower and the five-hundred-dollar-down bungalow.

The instinct to return to Nature lies deep in men like music that slumbers in harpstrings, but the return to Nature via the five-forty-six accommodation is fraught with chance.

Nature cannot abide the haunts of men—she faints on the asphaltic bosom of the city; but to abide the haunts of Nature men's hearts lived. Behind that asphaltic bosom and behind faces too tired to smile, hearts bud and leaf when millinery and open street cars announce the spring. Behind that asphaltic bosom the murmur of the brook is like an insidious underground stream; and when for a moment it gushes to the surface men pay the five hundred dollars down and enclose return postage for a flower-seed catalogue.

The commuter lives with his head in the rarefied atmosphere of his thirty-fifth-story office, his heart in the five-hundred-dollar-down plot of improved soil, and one eye on the time-table.

For longer than its most unprogressive inhabitant dared hope, the township of Newton lay comfortable enough without the pale, until one year the Interurban reached out steel arms and scooped her up to the bosom of the city. Overnight, as it were, the inoculation was complete. Bungalows and one-story, vine-grown real-estate offices sprang up on large light-brown tracts of improved property; traffic sold by the book.

The New Banner Store, stirred by the heavy three-trolley Interurban cars and the new proximity of the city, swung a three-color electric sign across the sidewalk and instituted

By Fannie Hurst

ILLUSTRATED BY F. R. CRUGER



"See, Children! Just as Soon as I Say a Word Mad Like a Hot New No Goss"

a leading-stamp system; but, in spite of the three-color electric sign and double the advertising space in the Newton Weekly Gazette, Julius Binawanger felt the suction of the city drawing at his strength, and at the close of the second summer took an inventory and frowned at what he saw there.

The frown remained an indelible furrow between his eyes. Mrs. Binawanger observed it across the family table one Saturday and paused in the epic rite of ladling soup out of a tureen, a slight pucker on her large, soft-fleshed face.

"Honest, Julius, when you come home from the store nights, right away I get the blues!"

Mr. Binawanger glanced up from his soup and regarded his wife. Late sunshine percolated into the dining room through a vine that clambered up the screen door and flecked a design like coarse lace across his inquiring features.

"Right away you get what, Becky?"

"Right away I get the blues. A long face you've had for so long I can't remember."

"Ya, ya, Becky; something you got to have to talk about! A long face she puts on me yet, children."

"Ain't I right, Phil? Ain't I, fuzzy? Ask your own children!"

Mr. Isadore Binawanger shrugged his custom-made shoulders until the padding bulged like the muscles of a heavyweight champion and tossed backward the mane of his black pompadour.

"Ma, I keep my mouth closed. Every time I open it I put my foot in it."

Mr. Binawanger wagged a rheumatic forefinger.

"A dude like you, with a red-and-white shirt like I wouldn't keep in stock, ain't—"

"See, ma; you started something!"

"Sh-h-h, Julius! For your own children I'm ashamed! Once a week fuzzy comes out to supper, and like a funeral it is! For your own children to be afraid to open their mouths ain't nothing to be proud of. Right now your own daughter is afraid to begin to tell you something—something what's happened. Ain't it, Phil?"

Miss Pearl Binawanger tugged a dainty bite out of a slice of bread and showed the white of her teeth against the clear gold-olive of her skin. The same scarf of sunshine fell across her shoulders and lay warm on her little bosom and across her head, which was small and dark as La Gioconda's.

"I ain't saying nothing, am I, mamma? The minute I try to talk to papa about—about moving to the city or anything, he gets excited like the store was on fire."

"Ya, ya; more as that I get excited over such nonsense." "No; to your papa you children say nothing. It's me that gets my head dinner full. Your children, Julius, think that for me you do everything what I ask you; but I don't see it. Then your papa the dumplings, Polli. Can I help it that he carries on him a face like a funeral?"

"Na, na, Becky; for why should I have a long face? To-morrow I buy me a false face like on Valentine's Day and then you don't have to look at me no more."

"See, right away mad he gets with me! Izzy, them noodles I made only on your account. In the city you don't get 'em like that, huh? Some more Kartoffeladai, Julius?"

"Ya; but not so much! My face don't suit my wife and children yet—that's the latest!"

"Three times a day, Izzy, I ask your papa if he don't feel right. 'Yes,' he says; always 'Yes.' Like I says to Polli, what's got him since he's in the new store I don't know."

"Ach, you the whole three of you make me sick! What you want me to do—walk the tight rope to show what a good humor I got?"

"No; we want, Julius, that you should come home with a long face on you till for the neighbors I'm ashamed!"

"A little more Kartoffeladai, Becky. Not so much!"

"Like they don't talk enough about us already! With a young lady in the house, we live out here where the dogs won't bark at us!"

"I only wish all girls had just so good a home as Pearlle."

"Aw, papa. I'd rather live in a coop in the city, where a girl can have some life, than in a palace out in this hole."

"Hole, she calls a room like this, when a dining-room set she sits on what her grandfather made with his own hands out of the finest cherry wood, a——"

"For a young girl, can you blame her? She feels like, if she lived in the city, she would meet people and Izzy's friends. Talk for yourself, Polli."

"Boys like Ignatz Landauer and Max Teitlebaum, what he meets at the Young Men's Association. Talk for yourself, Polli."

"Polli's got a tenant for the house, Julius. I ain't afraid to tell you."

"I don't listen to such nonsense."

"From the real-estate office they sent 'em, Julius, and Polli took 'em through. Furnished off our hands they take it for three months, Julius, till their bungalow is done for 'em. Forty dollars for a house like ours on the wrong side of town, away from the improvements, ain't so bad. A grand young couple; no children. Izzy thinks it's a grand idea, too, Julius. He says if we move to the city he don't have to live in such a dark little hall room no more. To the hotel he can come with us on family rates just so cheap. Ain't it, Izzy?"

Mr. Isadore Binswanger broke his conspiracy of silence gently, as a skeptic at breakfast taps his candle-blown egg with the tip of a silver spoon—once, twice, three; then opens it slowly and suspiciously.

"I said, pa, that with forty dollars a month rent from the house and——"

"In my own house where I belong and can afford, I stay! I'm an old man and——"

"Not so fast, pa; not so fast! I only said that with forty dollars from the house for three months, this winter you can live almost as cheap in the city as here. And for me to come out every Saturday night to take Pearlle to the theater ain't such a cinch, neither. Take a boy like Max Teitlebaum; he likes her well enough to take her to the theater himself; but by the time he gets out here for her he ain't got no enjoyment left in him."

"When a young man likes well enough a young lady a forty-five minutes' street-car ride is like nothing."

"Aw, papa, in storybooks such talk is all right; but when a young man has got to change cars at Low Bridge and wait for the Owl going home, it don't work out so easy—does it, Izzy? Does it, mamma?"

"For three years, pa, even before I got my first job in the city, always mamma and Pearlle been wantin' a few months away."

"With my son in the city, losing every two months his job, I got enough city to last me so long as I live! When in my store I need so bad a good young man for the advertising and stock, to the city he has to go for a salesman's job. When a young man can't get along in business with his old father I don't go running after him in the city."

"Pa, for heaven's sakes, don't begin that! I'm sick of listening to it. Newton ain't no place for a fellow to waste his time in."

"What else you do in the city I like to know?"

"Julius, leave Izzy alone, when one night a week he comes home."

"For my part, you don't need to move to the city. I only said to Pearlle and ma when they asked me, that a few months in a family hotel like the Wellington can't bust you. For me to come out here every Saturday night to take Pearlle in to the theater ain't no cinch. In town there's plenty grand boys who live at the Wellington—Ignatz Landauer, Max Teitlebaum, and all that crowd. Yourself I've heard you say how much you like Max."

"For why, when everybody is moving out to Newton, we move away?"

"That's just it, papa; now with the interurban boom you got the chance to sublet. Ain't it, mamma and Izzy?"

"Sure it is."

"Ya, ya; I know just what's coming, but for me Newton is good enough."

"What about your children, Julius? You ain't the only one in the family."

"Twenty-five years I've lived in this one place, since the store was only so big as this room; and on this house we didn't have a second story. A home that I did everything but build with my own hands I don't move out of so easy. Such ideas you let your children pump you up with, Becky!"



"There's Too Many Fine Girls in the City for the Boys to Come Out Here on a Forty-Five Minute Ride"

"See, children! You say he can't never refuse me nothing. Listen how he won't let me get in a word crossways before he snaps me off! If we sublet, Julius, we——"

"Sublet we don't, neither! I should ride forty-five minutes into the city after my hard day's work, when away from the city forty-five minutes every one else is riding! My house is my house; my yard is my yard. I don't got no ideas like my high-toned son and daughter for a hotel, where to stretch your feet you got to pay for the space."

"Listen to your papa, children! Even before I got my mouth open good now he talks back to a wife that nursed him through ten years of bronchitis! All he thinks I'm good enough for is to make poultices and rub on his chest goose grease."

"Here, Billy! Here, Kitty! Kitty! See, Becky; even the cat won't come, so funny with me you are."

"Ain't I asked you often enough, Julius, not to feed on the carpet a piece of meat to the cat? Sh-h, Billy! Scat! All that I'm good enough for is to clean up. How he talks to his wife yet!"

Mrs. Binswanger caught her breath on the crest of a sob and pushed her untouched plate toward the center of the table; tears swam in a heavy film across her eyes and thickened her gaze and voice.

"This ain't no hole for—for a girl to live in!"

"All I wish is you should never live in a worse."

"I ain't got nothin' here, papa, but to sit and sit and sit on the porch every night with you and mamma. When Izzy comes out once a week to take me to a show how he fusses and fusses you hear for yourself. For a girl nearly—twenty—it ain't no joke."

"It ain't, papa; it ain't no joke for me to have to take her in and out every week, lemme tell you."

"Eat your supper, Polli; not eating don't get you nowhere with your papa."

"I I don't want nothin'."

A tear wiggle-waggled down Miss Binswanger's smooth cheek and she fumbled at her waistline for her handkerchief.

"I—I—I just wish sometimes I—was dead!"

Mr. Binswanger shot his bald head outward suddenly, as a turtle darts forward from its case, and rapped the table misily, his tight flat clutched round an upright fork and his voice climbing to a falsetto:

"I I wish in my life I had never heard the name of the city!"

"Now, Julius, don't begin!"

"Ruination it has brought me! My boy won't stay by me in the store so he can galavant in the city; my girl won't talk to me no more, for madness because we ain't in the city; my wife eats out of me my heart because we ain't in the city! For supper every night when I come home tired from the store all I get served to me is the city! I can't swallow no more! Money you all think I got what grows on trees just because I give all what I got. You should know how tight how tight I got to squeeze for it."

Mrs. Binswanger threw her arms apart in a wide gesture of helplessness.

"See, children; just as soon as I say a word mad like a wet hen he gets, and right away puts on a poor mouth."

"Mad yet I shouldn't get with such nonsense. Too good they both got it. Always I told you how we spoilt 'em!"

"Don't holler so, pa!"

"Don't tell me what to do! You with your pretty-man suit and your hair and finger nails polished like a shoeshine! You go to the city, and I stay home where I belong, in my own house."

"His house—always his house!"

"Ya; a eight-room house and running water she's got if she wants to have company. Your mamma didn't have no right rooms and finished attic when she was your age. In back of a feed store she sat me. Too good you got it, I say! New hardwood floors downstairs didn't I have to put in and electric light on the porch, so your company don't break his neck? Always something new; and now no more I can't eat a meal in peace."

"Sh-h-h, Julius!"

"I should worry that the Teitlebaums and the Landauers live in a fine family hotel in Seventy-second Street. Such people with log stores in Sixth Avenue can buy and sell us! Not even if I could afford it would I want to give up my house and my porch, where I can smoke my pipe, and my comfort that I worked for all my life, and move to the city in rooms so little and so far up I can't afford to pay for 'em. I should give up my chickens and my comforts!"

"Your comforts—always your comforts! Do I think of my comforts?"

"Ma, don't you and pa begin now with your fussing. Like cats you are one minute and the next like doves."

"Don't boss me in my own house, Izzy! So afraid your papa is that he won't get all the comforts what's coming to him! I wish you was so good to me as you are to that cat, Julius! Twice I asked you not to feed him on the carpet. Scat, Billy!"

"Pass me some noodles, ma."

"Good ones, eh, Izzy?"

"Fine, maw!"

"I ask you, is it more comfortable, Julius, for me to be cooped up in the city in a room that all together ain't so big as my kitchen? No; but of my children I think, too, besides my own comforts."

"Ya, ya! Becky, don't get excited. Look at your mamma, Pearlle! Shame on her, eh? How mad she gets at me till blue like her wrapper her face gets."

"My house and my yard so smooth like your hand, and my big porch and my new laundry, with patent a ringer, is more to me as a hotel in the city; but when I got a young-lady daughter with no attentions and no prospects I can't think always of my own comforts."

"Ya, ya, Becky; don't get excited."

"Don't ya-ya me, neither!"

"Ach, old lady, don't you know that only means how much I love you?"

"We got a young-lady daughter. Do you want that she should sit and sit and sit till forever we got a daughter—only she ain't young no more? I tell you out here ain't no place for a young girl. What has she got?"

"Yes, papa, what have I got? The trees for company!"

"Do you see, Julius, in the new bungalows any families moving in with young ladies? Would even your son Isadore,

what ain't a young lady, stay out here when he was old enough to get himself a job in the city?"

"That a boy should leave his old father like that!"

"Wasn't you always kickin' to me, pa, that there wasn't a future in this business after the traction came wasn't you?"

"No more arguments you get with me!"

"What chance, Julius, I ask you, has a gail like I'ol got out here in Newton? To sit on the front porch nights with Meena Schlomman don't get her nowhere; to go to the moving pictures with Eddie Goldstone, what can't make salt for himself, ain't nothing for a gail that hopes to do well for herself. If she only looks out of the corner of her eye at Mike Donnelly three fits right away you take!"

"Gott! That's what we need yet!"

"See! Even when I mention it, look at him, Pol, bow red he gets! But should she sit and sit?"

"Ach, such talk makes me sick! Plenty girls outside the city gets better husbands as in it. Na, na, mamma! Did you find me in the city?"

"Ach, Julius, stop foolin'. When I got you for a husband enough trouble I found for myself."

"In my business, like it goes down every day. Becky, I ain't got the right to make a move."

"See, the poor mouth again! Just so soon as we begin to talk about things! A man that can afford only last March to take out a new five-thousand-dollar life-insurance policy—"

"Sh-h-h, Becky!"

"For why shouldn't your children know it. Yes; upstairs in my little green box, along with my cameo earrings and gold watch chain, I got it put away. A new life-insurance policy, children, on light blue paper, with a red seal, I put away only last week. When a man that never had any insurance before takes it out so easy, he can afford it."

"Not—not because I could afford it I took it, Becky; but, with business low, I squeeze myself a little to look ahead."

"Only since we got the new store you got so tight. Now you got more, you don't let it go so easy. A two-story brick, with plate-glass fronts now, and always a long face!"

"A long face! You should be worried like I with big expenses and big stock and little business! Why do you think I take out a policy so late at such a terrible premium? Why? So when I'm gone you got something besides debts!"

"Just such a poor mouth you had, Julius, when we wanted on the second story."

"I ask you, Becky, one thing that you and the children ever wanted ain't I found a way to get it for you? I ask you."

"Ya; but a woman that was always economical like me you didn't need to refuse. Never for myself I asked for things."

"Ach, ma and pa, don't begin that on the one night a week I'm home."

"So economical all my life I been, till Izzy was ashamed to go to school in 'em I made him pants out of yours. You been a good husband, but I been just so good a wife—and don't you forget it!"

"Na, na, old lady; don't get excited again. But right here at my own table, even though I hate you should have to know it, Becky, in front of your children I say it: I—I'm all mortgaged up! Even on this house I'm—"

"On the old store you was mortgaged too. In a business a man has got to raise money on his assets. Didn't you always say that yourself? Business is business."

"But I ain't got the business no more, Becky. I—I ain't said nothing, hut—but next week I close out the trimmed hats, Becky."

"Papa!"

"Trimmed hats! Julius, your finest department!"

"For why should I keep a department that don't pay its salt? I ain't like you three; looks ain't everything."

"I know! I know! Ten years ago, the biggest year what we ever had, you closed out the rubber coats, too, right in the middle of the season. A poor mouth you'd have, Julius, if right now you was eating gold dumplings instead of chicken dumplings!"

"Na, na, Becky; don't pick on your old man!"

"Since we been married I—"

"Aw, ma and pa, go hire a hall!"

Suddenly Miss Binawanger clattered down her fork and pushed backward from the table. Tears streamed toward the corners of her mouth.

"That's always the way! What's the use of getting off the track? All we want to say, papa, is, we got a chance like we never had before to submit. Forty dollars a month and no children! For three months we could live in the city on family rates, and maybe for three months I'd know I was alive. A—a girl's got feeling, papa! And, honest, it—it ain't no trip, papa. What's forty-five minutes on the car with your newspaper? Honest, papa, it ain't!"

Mr. Isadore Binawanger drained a glass of water.

"Give 'er a chance, pal. The boys'll show her a swell time in the city. Max Teitelbaum and all that crowd. It ain't no fun for me traipin' out after her, lemme tell you!"



"Wolfs! Wolfs, All of You! To-Night You Got Me Where I Am at an End!"

Mr. Binawanger pushed back his chair and rose from the table. His eyes, the wet-looking, red-rimmed eyes of age and asthma, retreated behind a network of wrinkles as intricate as overhead wiring.

"I wish," he cried, "I was so far as the bottom of the ocean away from such nonsense as I find in my own family. Up to my neck I'm full. Like wolfs you are! On my neck I can feel your breath hot like a furnace. Like wolfs you drive me till I—I can't stand it no more. All what I ask is my peace—my little house; my little pipe; my little porch—and not even my peace can I have! You—you're a pack of wolfs, I tell you! Even your fangs I can see; and—and—I—I wish I was so far away as the bottom of the ocean."

He shambled toward the door on legs bent to the cruel curve of rheumatism. The sun had dropped into a bursting west that was as red as a mist of blood. Its reflection lay on the smooth lawn and hung in the dark shadows of quiet trees, and through the fulvous haze of evening's first moment came the chirruping of crickets.

"I wish I was so far away as the bottom of the ocean!"

The tight-springed screen door aprang shut on his words and his footsteps shambled across the wide ledge of porch. A silence fell across the little dining table and Miss Binawanger wiped at fresh tears; but her mother threw her a confident gesture of reassurance.

"Don't say no more now for a while, children."

Mr. Isadore Binawanger inserted a toothpick between his lips and stretched his limbs out at a hypotenuse from the chair.

"I'm done! I knew the old man would jump on me."

"Izzy, you and Pol go on now; for the theater you won't catch the seven-ten car if you don't hurry. Leave it to me, Pol. I can tell by your papa's voice was got him won. How he fumes like just now don't make no difference. You know how your papa is. Here, Pol; lemme help you with your coat."

"I—I don't want to go, mamma."

"Ach, now, Pol, you—"

"If you're coming with me you'd better get a hustle on. I ain't going to hang round this graveyard all evening."

Her brother rose to his slightly corpulent five-foot-five and shook his trousers into their careful creases. His face was a soft-fleshed, rather careless replica of his mother's, with a dimple-cleft chin and a delicate down of beard that made his shaving a mainly accomplishment rather than a necessity.

"Here on the sideboard is your hat, Pol. Powder a little round your eyes. Just leave papa to me, Pol. Ach, how sweet that hat, with them roses out of stock, looks on you. Come out here—the side way. Ach, how nice it is out here on the porch! How short the days get; dark nearly already at seven. Good-by, children. Izzy, take your sister by the arm; the whole world don't need to know you're her brother."

"Leave the door on the latch, mamma."

"Have a good time, children. Ain't you going to say good-by to your papa, Pol? Your worst enemy he ain't. Julius, leave Billy alone—honest, he likes that cat better as his family! Tell your papa good-by, Pol."

"I said good-by."

"She should say good-by to me only if she wants to. Izzy, when you go out the gate drive back that rooster out of that mulberry tree. I'll wring his little galavantin' neck!"

"Good night, children. Take good care on the cars."

"Good night, mamma—papa!"

The gate clicked shut and the two figures moved into the mist of growing gloom. Over their heads the trees met and formed across the brick sidewalk a roof as softly dark as the ceiling of a church. Birds chirped.

Mrs. Binawanger leaned her wide uncorseted figure against a pillar and watched them until a curve in the avenue cut off her view; then she dragged a wicker chair across the veranda.

"We can sit out on the porch a while yet, Julius. Hot like midsummer it is for your rheumatism."

"Ya, ya. My slippers, Becky."

"Here."

"Ya, ya."

"Look across the yard, will you, Julius? The Schlomman still at the supper table! Fruit gelatin they got; I seen it cooling on the fence. We got new apples on the side-yard tree—you wouldn't believe, Julius! To-morrow I make pies."

The light of early evening hung like a veil, and through it the sad fragrance of burning leaves, which is autumn's incense, drifted from an adjoining lawn.

"Sh-h-h, chickyl! Sh-h-h! Back in the yard I can't keep that rooster roost, Julius. And to-day for thirty cents I had that puling in the garden fence fixed too. Honest, to keep a yard like ours going is expense all the time. People in the city without yards is lucky."

"In all Newton there ain't one like ours! Look, Becky, at that white rosebush flowering so late, just like she was a bride."

"When Izzy was home at least we didn't have the expense of weeding."

"Now when he comes home all he does is to change neckties and make trouble."

"Ach, my moon vine! Look how those white flowers open right in your face—one by one, like big stars coming out."

"Um-m-m-m! And smell, Becky, how good!"

"Here, lemme pull them heavy shoes off for you, papa. Listen! There goes that oriole up in the cherry tree again. Listen to the trills he's got in him. Pull, Julius; I ain't no derrick!"

"Ah-h, how good it feels to get 'em off! Now light my pipe, Becky. Always when you light it better it tastes. Hold! There make out of your hand a cup—there! [Pu-pu-pu] There! Now sit down by me, Becky!"

"Move over."

"Ach, Becky, when we got our little house like this, with a yard so smooth as my hand, where we don't need shoes or collars, and with our own fruit right under our noses—for why ain't you satisfied?"

"For myself, Julius, believe me, it's too good; but Pol, we—"

"Look at all what you can see right here from our porch! Look there, through the trees at the river; right in front of our eyes it bends for us. Look, what a street we live on! We should worry it ain't in the booming part! Quiet like a temple, with trees on it older as you and me together."

"The caterpillars is bad this year, Julius. Trees ain't no cheap, neither. In the city such worries they ain't got."

"For what, with a place like this, Becky? With running water and—"

"It's Pol, Julius; not a thing a beautiful girl like Pol has out here."

"Nonsense! It's a sin she should want a better place as this. Ain't she got a plush parlor and a piano, and—"

"It's like Izzy says, Julius—there's too many fine girls in the city for the boys to come out here on a forty-five-minute ride. What boys has she got out here? Mike Donnelly and—"

"Ach!"

"That's what we need—just something like that should happen to us. Rot, believe me, it's happened before when a girl ain't got no better to pick from. How I worry about it, you should know."

"Becky, with even such talk you make me sick."

"Mark my word, it's happened before, Julius! That's why I say, Julius, a few months in the city this winter and she could meet the right young man. Take a boy like Max Teitelbaum. Yourself you said how grand and steady he is. Twice, with Izzy, he's been out here; and not once his eyes off Pol did he take."

"Teitelbaum, with a store twice so big as ours, on Sixth Avenue, don't need to look for us—twice they can buy and sell us."

"Is that so! To me that makes not one difference. Put Pol in the city, where it don't take an hour to get to her, and—ach!—almost anything could happen. Not once did he take his eyes off her; such a grand, quiet boy too."

"When a young man's got thoughts a forty-five-minute street-car ride don't keep him away."

"Nonsense! I always say I never feel hungry till I see in front of me a good meal. If I have to get dressed and go

out and market for it I don't want it. It's the same with marriage. You got to work up in the young man the appetite. What they don't see they don't get hungry for. They got to get eyes bigger as their stomachs first."

"Such talk makes me sick! Suppose she don't get married, ain't she got a good home and —"

"An old maid you want yet! A beau-ti-fool girl like nur Poil he wants to make out of her an old maid! Or she should break her parents' hearts with a match like Mike Donnelly —"

"Becky!"

"Aw, Julius, now we got the chance to rent for three months! Say we live there three months at the Wellington Hotel! Say it costs us a little more — everybody always says what a grand provider you are, Julius. Let them say a little more, Julius."

"I ain't got the money, Becky, I tell you. For me to refuse what you want is like I stick a knife in my heart; but I got poor business, Becky."

"Maybe in the end, Julius, it's the cheapest thing we ever done."

"I can't afford it, Becky."

"For only three months we can go, Julius. What's three months?"

"I got notes, Becky — notes already twice extended. If I don't meet 'em in March, God knows where —"

"Ya, ya, Julius; all that talk I know by heart."

"I ain't getting no younger, neither, Becky. Hardly through the insurance examination I could get. I ain't so strong no more. When I get big worries I don't sleep no good. I ain't so well nights, Becky."

"Always the imagination sickness, Julius!"

"I ain't so well, I tell you, Becky."

"Last time, when all you had was the neuralgia and you came home from the store like you was dying, Doctor Ellenburg told me right here on this porch that never did he know a man so nervous of dying like you."

"I can't help it, Becky."

"If I was so afraid like you of dying, Julius, not one meal could I enjoy. A healthy man like you, with nothing but the rheumatism and a little asthma! Only last week you came home pale like a ghost, with a pain in your side, when it wasn't nothing but where your pipe burnt a hole in your pants pocket to give me some more mending to do."

"Just for five minutes you should have felt that pain!"

"Honest, Julius, to be a reward like you for dying, it ain't new — honest, it ain't."

"Always, Becky, when I think I ain't always going to be with you and the children, such a feeling comes over me!"

"Ach, Julius, be quiet! Without you I might just as well be dead too."

"I'm getting old, Becky — sixty-six ain't no spring chicken no more."

"That's right, Julius — stick knives in me!"

"Life is short, Becky — we must be happy while we got each other."

"Life is short, Julius; and for our children we should do all what we can. We can't always be with them, Julius. We — we must do the right thing by 'em, you and me, Julius."

"Like you say, we — we're getting old — together, Julius. We don't want nothing to reproach ourselves with."

"Ya, ya, Becky."

Darkness fell thickly, like blue velvet portières swinging together, and stars sprang out in a clear sky. They sat in silence. The gray cat, with eyes like opals, sprang into the hollow of Mr. Binswanger's arm.

"Billy, you come to sit by mamma and me? N-i-c-e Bil-ly!"

"We go in now, papa; in the damp you get rheumatism."

"Ya, ya, Becky. Hear how he purrs, like an engine."

"Come on, papa; damp-every minute it gets."

He rose, with his rheumatic jerkiness, placed the cat gently on all fours on the floor and closed his fingers round his wife's outstretched arm.

"When — when we go — go to the city, Becky, we don't sulk Billy; we — we take him with us — not, Becky?"

"Yes, papa."

"Ya, ya, Becky."

The chief sponsors for the family hotel are neurasthenia and bridge whist — the inability of the homemaker and the debility of the housekeeper. Under these invasions Hestia turns out the gas logs, pastes a To Let sign on the windows, locks the front door behind her and gives the key to the auctioneer.

The family holds out the dining-room clock and a pair of silver candlesticks that came over in the stupendously huge cargo that time and curio dealers have piled on the good ship Mayflower, engages a three-room suite on the ninth floor of a family hotel, and inaugurates the sly American paradox of housekeeping in non-housekeeping apartments.

The Wellington Hotel was a rooco haven for such refugees; its doors dwine open and offered them family rates and an excellent cuisine. Excellent cuisine, however, is a clever but spiceless parody on home cookery.

Mr. Binswanger read his evening menu with the furrow deepening between his eyes.

"Such a soup they got! Mulli-ga-what?"

"Sh-h, papa — mulligatawny! Barley soup."

"Mulligatawny! Fine mow!"

"Sh-h, Julius! Don't talk so loud. Does the whole dining room got to know you don't know nothing?"

Mrs. Binswanger took a nervous résumé of the red-and-gold, brightly-lighted dining room.

"For a plate of noodles soup, Becky, they can have all their mulligatawny! Fifteen cents for a plate of soup, Becky, and at home for that you could make a whole potful twice so good."

"Sh-h, papa!"

"Don't sh-h-h me no more, neither, I earlie! Five months, from October to February, I been shooed like I was one of our roosters at home got over in Schlossman's yard. There! You read for me, Izzy; such language I don't know."

Isadore took up a card and crinkled one eye in a sly wink toward his mother and sister.

"Rinderbrut und Kartoffelsalat, pa, mit Apfelmachen und Kalteraufschnitt!"

"Ya, ya! Make fun yet! A square meal should happen to me yet in a highway-robbery place like this!"

Mrs. Binswanger straightened her large-bosomed, stiff-corseted figure in its black basque, and pulled gently at her daughter's flesh-colored chiffon sleeve, which fell from her shoulder like an angel's wing.

"Look across the room, Poil. There's Max just coming in the dining room with his mother. Always the first thing he looks over at our table. Bow, Julius! Don't you see across the room the Teitelbaums coming in? I guess old man Teitelbaum is out on the road again."

Miss Binswanger flushed the same delicate pink as her child and showed her teeth in a vivid smile.

"Ain't heally, though, to-night, mamma? Look! When he holds up two fingers at me it means first he takes his mother up to her pinoche club and then by nine o'clock he comes back to me."

"How good that woman has got it! Look, Poil — another waist she's wearing again."

"Look how he pulls out the chair for his mother, Izzy. It would hurt you to do that for mamma, wouldn't it?"

"Say, missy, I learnt manners two years before you ever done anything but hold down the front porch out on Newton Avenue! I'd been meetin' Max Teitelbaum and Ignatz Landauer, and that crowd, over at the Young Men's Club before you'd ever been to a movie with anybody except Meena Schlossman."

"I don't see that all your good start gnt you anywheres."

"Don't let swell society go to your head, missy. You ain't got Max yet, neither. You ought to be ashamed to be so crazy about a boy! Wait till I tell you something when we get upstairs that'll take some of your kink out, missy."

"Children, children! Hush your fussing. Julius, don't read all the names off the bill of fare."

Miss Binswanger regarded her brother under level brows and threw him a retort that sized across the table like drops of water on a hot stove top.

"Anyways, if I was a fellow that couldn't keep a job more than two months at a time I'd lay quiet! I wouldn't be out of a job all the time and beggin' my father to set me up in business when I was always getting fired from every place I worked!"

"Children!"

"Well, he always starts with me, mamma."

"Izzy, ain't you got no respect for your sister? For heaven's sakes, take that bill of fare away from your papa, Izzy! He'll burn a hole in it. Always the prices he reads out loud, till so embarrassed I get. No ears and eyes he has for anything else. He reads and reads, but enough he don't eat to keep alive a bird."

Mr. Binswanger drew his spectacles off his nose, snapped them into a worn leather case and into his vest pocket; a wan smile lay on his lips.

"I got only eyes for you, Becky, eh? All dressed up, ain't you? black lace yet! What you think of your mamma, children? Young she gets — not?"

"Ach, Julius!"

The little bout of tenderness sent a smile round the table, and behind the veil of her lashes Miss Binswanger sent the arrow of a glance across the room. "Honest, mamma, I wonder if Max sees anything green on me."

"He sees something sweet on you, maybe, Phil. Izzy, pass your pa some railishes. Not a thing does that man eat, and such an appetite he used to have!"

"Railishes better as these we get in our yard at home. Ten cents for six railishes! Against my appetite it goes to eat 'em when in my yard at home —"

"Home — always home!"

"Papa, please don't put your napkin in your collar like a bib. Mamma, make him take it out. Honest, even for the waiter I'm ashamed. How he watches us, too, and lags behind the tray!"

"Leave me alone, Charlie. My shirt front I don't use for no bib! Laundry rates in this hold-up place ain't so cheap."

"Mamma, please make him take it out."

"Julius!"

"Look, papa, at the Teitelbaums and Schoenfeldts laughing at us. Look now at him, mamma! Just to spite me he bends over and drinks his soup out loud out of the tip of his spoon — please, papa!"

Mr. Binswanger jerked his napkin from its moorings beneath each ear and peered across at his daughter, with his face as deeply creased as a raisin.

"I wish," he said low in his throat and with angry emphasis, quivering his lips behind the gray and black bristles of his mustache, "ten times a day I wish I was back in my little house in Newton, where I got my comfort and my peace. You children I got to thank for this — you children!"

Mr. Isadore Binswanger replaced his spoon in his soup plate and leaned back against his chair.

"Aw now, papa, don't beg!"

"You good-for-nothing, you! With your hair rombed up straight on your head like a girl's, and a plaid shirt like I'd be ashamed to carry in stock — you got no put-in! If I give you five thousand dollars for a



"You Should Know How My Father and My Married Brothers Toss Me!"



business for yourself you don't care so much what kind of manners I got. Five thousand dollars he asks me for to go in business when he ain't got it in him to keep a job for six months."

"The last job wasn't —"

"Right now, in this highway-robbery hotel you got me into, I got to pay your board for you. If you want five thousand dollars from me you got to get rid of me some way for my insurance policy, is all I can say. And sometimes I wish you would easier for me it would be."

"Julius!"

His son crumpled his napkin and tossed it toward the center of the table. His soft, moist lips were twisted in anger, and his voice, under cover of a whisper, trembled with that same anger.

"For what little board you've paid for me I can't hear about it no more. I'll go out and —"

"Sh-h, Izzy! Sh-h, papa! All over the dining room they can hear you. Sh-h!"

"Home I ain't never denied my children—open doors they got always in my house; but in a highway-robbery hotel, where I can't afford —"

"We got the cheapest family rates here in this hotel. Such rates we get here, children, and highway robbery your father calls it!"

"Five months we been in the city and two months already a empty house standing out there waiting, and nothing from it coming in—a house I love like my life; a house what me and your mamma wish we was back in every minute of the day!"

"I only said, Julius, for myself I like my little home best; but —"

"I ain't got the strength for the street-car ride no more. I ain't got appetite for this sloppy American food no more. I can't breathe no more in that coop upstairs. Right now you should know how my feet hurt for slippers; a collar I got to wear to supper when like a knife it cuts me! I can't afford this. I got such troubles with business I only wish for one day you should have 'em. I want my little house, my porch, my vines and my chickens. I want my comfort. My son ain't my boss!"

Isadore pushed back from the table, his jaw low and swollen.

"I ain't going to sit through a meal and be abused like I was a —"

"You ain't got to sit. Stand up then!"

"Izzy! Hush, Izzy! The people! Julius, so help me if I come down to a meal with you again! Look, Julius! The Teitlebaums are watching us. Smile at me, Pol, like we was joking. Izzy, if you leave this table now I I can't stand it! Laugh, Pol, like we was having our little fun among us."

The women exchanged the ghastly simulacrum of a smile and the meal was resumed in silence. Only small heads sprang out on the shiny surface of Mr. Binawanger's head, like dewdrops on the glossy surface of leaves; and twice his fork slipped and clattered from his hand.

"So excited you got right away, Julius! Nervous like a rat you are."

"I I ain't got the strength no more, Becky. Pink sleeping tablets I got to take yet to make me sleep. I ain't got the strength."

"Sh-h, Julius; don't get excited! In the spring we go home. You don't want, Julius, to spoil everything right this minute. Ain't it enough the way our Pol has come out in these five months? Such a grand time that girl has had this winter! Do you want that the Teitlebaums should know all our business, and spoil things?"

"I I wish sometimes that name I had never heard in my life. In my days a young girl —"

"Sh-h, Julius; we won't talk about it now—we change the subject."

"I —"

"Look over there, will you, Pol? Always extras the Teitlebaums have on their table. Paprika and—what is that red stuff? Chili sauce? Such service we don't get. Pink carnations on their table too! To-morrow at the desk I complain. Our money is just so good as theirs."

Miss Binawanger raised her harried eyes from her plate and smiled at her mother; she was like a dark red rose, trembling, titillating, and with dewy eyes.

"Don't stare so, mamma."

"Izzy, are you going to be home to-night? One night it won't hurt you to stay. Like you run round nights to dance halls ain't nothing to be proud of."

"Now start something, mamma, so papa can jump on me again! If Pearlle and Max are going to use the front room this evening, what shall I do—sit in a corner till he's gone and I can go to bed?"

"I should care if he goes to dance halls or not! What I say, Becky, don't make no difference to my son. Look how I legged him to hold on to his job!"

"If you've done your desert wait till we get upstairs, papa. The dining room knows already enough of our business."

Miss Binawanger pushed back from the table and got to her feet. Tears rose in a sheer film across her eyes; but she smiled with her lips and led the procession of her family

from the glibbling dining room, her small dark head held upward by the check-rein of scorched pride and the corner of her tear-dimmed glance for the remote table with the centerpiece of pink carnations.

By what seemed devious forethought the Binawanger three-room suite was rigidly impervious to sunlight, air and daylight. Its infinitesimal sitting room, which the jerking backward of a couch cover transformed into Mr. Isadore Binawanger's bedchamber, afforded a one-window view of a long, narrow air shaft, which rose ten stories from a square of asphalt courtyard, up which the heterogeneous lumes of cookery were wafted like smoke through a flue.

Mr. Binawanger dropped into a veteran armchair that had long since finished duty in the *suite de luxe*. He was suddenly old and as withered as an aspen leaf trembling on its rotten stem. Vermiculate cords of veins ran through his flesh like the choreography of pain, written in the blue of an indelible pencil; yellow crow's-feet rayed outward from his eyes as deep as clawprints in damp clay.

"Becky, help me off with my shoes; heavy like lead they feel."

"Pol, unlace your papa's shoes. Since I got to dress for dinner I can't stoop no more."

Miss Binawanger tugged daintily at her father's boots, staggering backward at each pull.

"Ach! Go 'way, Pearlle. Better than that I can do myself."

"See, mamma! Nothing suits him."

Mrs. Binawanger regarded her husband's sallowness with anxious eyes; her large bosom heaved under its showy lace yoke and her short, dimpled hands twirled at their rings.

"To-night, Julius, if you don't do like the doctor says, I telephone him to come. That a man should be such a coward! It don't do you no good to take only one sleeping tablet; two he said is what you need."

"Too much sleeping powder is what killed old man Knaum."

"Ach, Julius, you heard yourself what Doctor Ellenburg said. Six of the little pink tablets he said it would take to kill a man. How can two of 'em hurt you? Already by the bed I got the box of 'em waiting, Julius, with an orange, so they don't even taste."

"It ain't doctors and their *gadinks*, Becky, can do me good. Pink tablets can't make me sleep. I — Ach, Becky, I'm tired—tired!"

Isadore rose from the couch bed and punched his head-print out of the cushion.

"Lay here, pa."

"Na, na; I go me to bed. Such a thing full of lumps don't rest me like a sofa at home. Na; I go me to bed, Becky."

Isadore relaxed to the couch once more, pillowed his head on interlaced hands, yawned to the ceiling, blew two columns of cigarette smoke through his nostrils and watched them curl upward.

"This ain't so worse, pa."

"I go me to bed."

"For a little while, Julius, can't you stay up? At nine o'clock comes Max to see Pol. I always say a young man thinks more of a young girl when her parents stay in the room a minute."

Isadore fitted his thumbs in his waistcoat armholes and flung one revolving limb over the other.

"What Max Teitlebaum thinks of Ivarlie I already know. To-day he invited me to lunch with him."

"Izzy!"

"Izzy! Why you been so close-mouthed?" Mrs. Binawanger threw her short heavy arm at full length across the table top and leaned toward her son, so that the table lamp lighted her face with its generous scallop of chin and exacerbated the concern in her eyes. "You had lunch to-day with Max Teitlebaum and about Pol you talked?"

"That's what I said."

Miss Binawanger leaned forward in her low rocker, suddenly pink, as though each word had been a filip to her blood; and a faint terra cotta ran under the olive of her skin, lighting it.

"Like fun you did!"

"All right then, maw; I'm lyin' and I won't say no more."

"I didn't mean it, Izzy!"

"Izzy, tell your sister what he said!"

"Well, right to my face she contradicts me."

"Mamma, Izzy."

"Well, he likes you all right —"

"Did he say that about me—honest, Izzy?"

Her breath came sweet as thyme between her open lips, and her eyes could not meet her mother's gaze, which burned against her lids.

"See, Pol? See, papa? Wake up a minute and listen. When I mentioned Max Teitlebaum you always said a grand boy like one of the Teitlebaum boys, with such prospects, ain't got no time for a girl like our Pol. Always I told you that you got to work up the appetite. See, papa, how things work out? See, Pol? What else did he have to say, Izzy? He likes her, eh?"

Isadore turned on his side and flicked a rim of ash off his cigarette with a manicured fourth finger.

"Don't get excited too soon, ma. He didn't come out plain and say anything; but I guess a boy like Max Teitlebaum thinks we don't need a brick house to fall on us."

"What you mean, Izzy?"

"What I mean? Say, ain't it as plain as your now? You don't need two brick houses to fall on you, do you?"

Mrs. Binawanger admitted to a mental pithitis and threw out her hands in a gesture of helplessness.

"Believe me, Izzy, maybe I am dumb, so bad my head works when your papa worries me; but what you mean I don't know."

"Me neither, Izzy!"

"Say, there ain't much to tell. He likes Pearlle—that much he wasn't bashful to me about. He likes Pearlle and he wants to go in the general store and ladies' furnishing goods business. Just clothing like his father's store he hates. Why should he stay in a business, he says, like his father's, that is already built up? His two married brothers and his father, he says, is enough in the one business."

"Such an ambitious boy—always anxious to do for himself! I wish, Izzy, you had some of his ambition. You hear, Pol? In the same business as papa he wants to go."

Mrs. Binawanger rocked complacently, a smile crawled across her lips, and she nodded rhythmically to the tilting of her rocking-chair. Her eyes closed softly in the pleasant phantasmagoria of a dream. Mr. Binawanger slumped lower in his chair.

"A good head for business that Max Teitlebaum has on him. Like your mamma says, Izzy, you should have one just half so good."

"There you go again, pa—pickin', pickin'! If you'd give a fellow a start and lend him a little capital—I'd have some ambition, too, and start for myself."

Mr. Binawanger leaped forward at full stretch, as a jet of flame shoots through a stream of oil.

"For yourself! On what? From where would I get it? Cut it out from my heart? Two months already I begged you to come out by me in the store and see if you can help start something to get back the trade. Now we need young blood in the store to get —"

"Aw, I —"

"Five thousand dollars I give you for to lose in the ladies' ready-to-wear! Another white elephant we need in the family yea. Not five thousand dollars outside my insurance I got to my name; and even if I did have it I wouldn't —"

"Julius!"

"I mean it, so help me! Even if I did have it, not a cent to a boy what don't listen to his old father!"

"For heaven's sakes, pa, quit your hollering! If you ain't got it to your name I'm sorry for Pearlle."

"For me?"

"You think, pa, a boy like Max Teitlebaum—a boy that Banker Finburg's daughter is crazy after—is getting married only because you got a nice daughter?"

"What do you mean, Izzy?"

"The words are full of 'em just as fine. I didn't need no brick house to fall on me to-day at lunch. He didn't come right out and say nothing, but when he said he wanted to get in a business he could build up, I seen what he meant."

"What?"

"Sure, I seen it. I guess his father gives him six or seven thousand dollars to get his start, and just so much he wants from the girl's side. He can get it easy too. If—if you'd fork over, pa, I—him and I could start maybe together; and —"

"You—you —"

"Your papa, Izzy, can do for his girl just like the best can do for theirs. Julius, can't you?"

"God in Himmel! I—I—you—you pack of wolve, you!"

"Such names you can't call your wife, Julius. Just let me tell you that! Such names you can't call me!"

Anger trembled in Mrs. Binawanger's vocal cords, like the electric current running over a wire; but Mr. Binawanger sprang suddenly to his feet and crushed the white knuckles of his clenched fist down on the table with a force that broke the flesh. The red lights of anger lay mirrored in the pools of his eyes, as danger lanterns on a dark bridge are reflected in black water.

"Wolve! Wolve, all of you! You—you—to-night you got me where I am at an end! To-night you got to know. I I can't keep it in no more! You got to know to-night—to-night!" His voice caught in a tight knot of strangulation; he was quivering and pained. "To-night you—you got to know!"

A sudden trembling took Mrs. Binawanger.

"For heaven's sakes, know what, Julius? Know what?"

"I'm done for! I'm gone under! Till it happened you wouldn't believe me. Two years I seen it coming; two years I been fightin' and fightin' fightin' it by myself! And now for yourselves you look in the papers two weeks from to-morrow, the first of March, and see: I'm done for! I'm gone under—I —"

"Julius! You—you ain't, Julius! You ain't!"

His voice rose like a gale:

"I'm gone under—I ain't got twenty cents on the dollar! I'm gone, Becky! Beat up! To-morrow two weeks the

(Continued on Page 34)



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## THE GOOD PROVIDER

Continued from Page 16

creditors, they're on me! My last extension expires and they're on me. I been fightin' and fightin'. Twenty cents on the dollar I can't meet, Becky. I can't, Becky. I can't! I been fightin' and fightin', but I can't, Becky—I can't! I'm gone!"

"Pa!"

"Julius! Julius! You—you don't mean it, Julius! You—you don't mean it! You're fooling us! Julius!"

Small, cold tears welled to the corners of his eyes.

"I'm gone, Becky! And now he—he wants the shirt off my back! He can have it, God knows; but—but—ah, Becky—I wish I could have saved you! But that a man twice so strong as his father—ah, Gott! What—what's the use? I'm gone, Becky—gone!"

Mr. Isadore Binswanger swung to his feet and regarded his parent with the dazed eyes of a sleepwalker waking on a perilous ledge.

"Aw, pa, why didn't you tell a fellow? I we—aw, pa, I can knuckle down if I got to, Gee-whiz! How was a fellow to know? You—you been cuttin' up about everything since—since we was kids. Aw, pa, please—give me a chance, pa! I can knuckle down, pa! Pa!"

He approached the racked form of his father as though he would throw himself a stepping-stone at his feet; and then, because his voice stuck in his throat and he ached until the tears sprang to his eyes, he turned suddenly and went out of the room, slamming the door behind him.

"I I'm gone, Becky! What you want for Pa! I can't do. I'm gone under! We got to start over again. It was the Interurban done it, Becky. I needed new capital to meet the new competition. I could have stood up under it then, Becky; but—but—"

"Ach, my husband—for myself I don't care. Ach, my husband!"

"I—I'm gone, Becky—gone!"

He rose to his feet and ambled feebly to his bedroom, his fingers feeling of the furniture for support and his breath coming in the long wherms of dry tears. And in the cradle of her mother's arms Miss Binswanger wept the hot tears of black despair.

"Oh, my baby! Ach, my husband! A good man like him! A good man like him!"

"Don't cry, mamma; don't—cry!"

"Nothing he ever refused me—and now, when we should be able to do for our children, and—"

"Don't cry, mamma; don't cry!"

"If—if he had the money—for a boy like Max—he'd give it, Pa. Such a good husband! Such—ach, I go me in to papa now—poor papa! I've been bad, Pa; we must make it up to him. We—"

"Sh-h-h!"

"We got to start over again, Pa, to the bone I'll work my fingers. I—"

"Sh-h, mamma—sh-h-h! Somebody's knocking."

"It's—it's Izzy, baby. See how sorry he gets right away. He ain't a bad boy, Pa; only always I've spoiled him. Come in, my boy—come in and go in to your papa."

The door swung open and lanned backward the stale air in the sharp gust, and the women sprang apart mechanically as automatons, the sagging, open-mouthed vacancy of surprise on Mrs. Binswanger's face, the tears still wet on her daughter's cheeks like dew.

"Mr. Teitlebaum!"

"Max!"

Mr. Teitlebaum hesitated at the threshold, the flavor of his amorous spirit tasty on his lips and curving them into a smile.

"That's my name! Hello, Pearl—girlie! How-d'ye-do, Mrs. Binswanger? What—what—"

He regarded them with dark, quiet eyes, the quick red of embarrassment running high in his face.

"Ah, excuse me! I might have known—I'm too early. Like my mother says, I was in such a hurry to get back here again I nearly got out and pushed the Subway. I—you must excuse me. I—"

"No, no; sit down, Mr. Teitlebaum. Pearl ain't feelin' so well this evening; she's all right now, though. Such a cold she's got—ain't you, Pa?"

"Yes, yes. Such a cold I got. Sit—sit down, Max."

He regarded her, with the rims of his eyes stretched wide in anxiety.

"Down at supper so well you looked, Pearl. I says to my mother like a flower you looked."

A log of tears rose sheer before her.

"Her papa, Mr. Teitlebaum, he ain't so well, neither. Just now he went to bed and he—he said to you I should give him excusers."

"So! Ain't that too bad now!"

"Sit down, Max—there, next to mamma." He leaned across the table toward the little huddle of her figure, his emotion written frankly across his features.

"Pearlie—"

"She'll be all right in a minute, Mr. Teitlebaum—like her papa she is, always so afraid of a little sickness."

"Pearlie, ain't you going to look at me?" She sprang from his light hand on her shoulder and the tears formed in little globules, trembled, fell; and a sudden roll of resolution straightened her back.

"We I been lying to you, Max. I ain't sick!"

"Pa!"

"I—I think I know, little Pearl!"

"Pa!"

"No, no; it's best we tell the truth, mamma."

"Ya, ya! Oh, my—"

"We—we're in big trouble, Max. Business trouble. The store, ever—ever since the traction—it ain't been the same."

"I know, little Pearl. I—"

"Wait a minute, Max. We—we ain't what you maybe think we are. To-morrow two weeks we got to meet creditors and extension notes. We can't pay even twenty cents on the dollar. We're gone under."

"I—"

"We ain't got it to meet them with, Papa. If a man like papa couldn't make it go nobody could—"

"Such a man, Mr. Teitlebaum; so honest; so—"

"Sh-h, mamma!"

"It's our—my fault, Max. He was afraid even last year; but I—even then I was the one that wanted the expense of the city. Mamma didn't want it—he didn't. It was me. I I—"

"My fault, too, Pa. Ach, Gott, my fault! How I drove him! How I drove him!"

"We—we got to go back home, Max. We're going back and help him to begin all over again. We—we been driving him like a pack of wolves. He never could refuse nobody nothing. If he thought mamma wanted the moon he was ready to go for it. Even when we was kids, he—"

"Ach, my husband! Such a grand provider! Such a husband!"

"Always we got our way out of him; but to-night—to-night, Max, right here in this chair all little he looked, all of a sudden. So little! His back all crooked and all tired; and—and I done it, Max. I ain't what you think I am. Oh! I done it!"

"Ach, my—"

"Don't cry, mamma. Sh-h! Ain't you ashamed, with Mr. Teitlebaum standing right here! You must excuse her, Max, so terrible upset she is. Sh-h, mamma!"

"Pearlie! Max came closer to the circle of light and his large features came out boldly. "Pearlie, don't you cry, neither, little girl—"

"I—I ain't."

"All what you tell me I know already."

"Max!"

"Mr. Teitlebaum!"

"You must excuse me, Mrs. Binswanger; but in nearly the same line of business news like that travels faster than you think. Only to-day I heard for sure how shaky things stand. You got my sympathies, Mrs. Binswanger; but—but such a failure don't need to happen."

Mrs. Binswanger clutched two hands round a throat too dry to swallow.

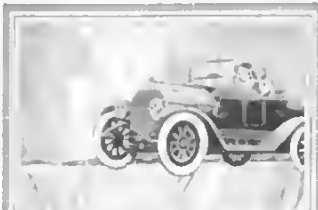
"He can't stand it. He isn't strong enough. It will kill him!"

"Sh-h, mamma! Do you want papa should hear you in the next room? Sh-h-h! Please! You must excuse her, Max."

"Pearlie," he placed his hand lightly on her shoulder—"Pearlie! Mrs. Binswanger, you must excuse me, too, but I got to say it while while I got the courage. Can't you guess it, little Pearl? I'm in love with you! I'm in love with you, Pearl, since the first month you came to this hotel to live!"

"Max!"

"Ach, Gott!"



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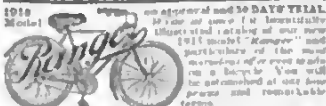
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"I only got this to say to you: I love you, little Pearl! To-day when I heard the news I was sorry, Pearl, and and glad too. It made things look easier for me. Right away I invited Izzy to lunch so, like a schoolboy, I could hint. I—two years I been wanting to get out of the store, Pearl, where there ain't a chance for me to build up nothing. Like I told Izzy to-day, I want to find a run-down business that needs building up, where I can accomplish things."

"Max!"

"I wanted him to know what I meant; but, like a schoolboy, so mixed up I got! Eight thousand dollars I got waiting for an opening. This failure—this failure don't need to happen, Pearl. With new capital and new blood we don't need to be afraid of tractions and competitions. With me and Izzy, and my eight thousand dollars put in out there, we—we—but this ain't no time to talk business. I—you must excuse me, Mrs. Binswanger, but—but—"

"Pell, my baby! Max!"

"I love you, Pearl—girlie! Ever since we been in the same hotel together, when I seen you every day fresh like a flower and so fine, I—I been head over head in love with you, Pearl. You should know how my father and my married brothers tease me! I—I love you, Pearl!"

She relaxed to his approaching arms and let her head fall back to his shoulder, so that her face, upturned to his, was like a dark flower; and he kissed her where the tears lay wet on her petal-smooth cheeks and on her lips that trembled.

"Max!"

"My little girlie!"

Mrs. Binswanger groped through tear-blinded eyes.

"This—this—ain't no place for a old woman, childern. This—this—Ach! What I'm sayin' I don't know! Like in a dream I feel."

"Me, too, mamma; me too! Like a dream! Ah, Max!"

"I tiptoe in and surprise papa, childern. I surprise papa. Ach, my childern—my childern! Like in a dream I feel."

She smiled at them, with the tears streaming from her face like rain down a window-pane; then opened the door to the room adjoining gently, and closed it more gently behind her. Her face was bathed in a peace that swam deep in her eyes, like reflected moonlight trailing down on a lagoon; her lips trembled in the hysteria of too many emotions. She held the silence for a moment and remained with her wide back to the door peering across the dim-lit room at the curve-backed outline of her husband's figure, hunched in a sitting posture on the side of the bed.

Beside him, on the white coverlet, a green tin box, with a convex top like a miniature trunk, lay on one end, its contents—bits of old-fashioned jewelry and a folded blue document with a splashy red seal—scattered about the bed.

She could hear him wheeze out the moany, long-drawn breaths that characterized his sleepless nights, his face the color of old ivory, waxy, and etched in the agony of carrying his trembling palm closer, closer to his mouth.

Suddenly Mrs. Binswanger cried out—a cry that was born in the unexplored regions of her heart, wild, primordial, full of terror.

"Jul—Jul—hux! Jul—hux!"

His hand jerked from his lips reflexly, so that the six small pink tablets in the trembling palm rolled to the corner of the room. His blood-driven face fell backward against the pillow and he relaxed frankly into short dry sobs, hollow and hacking, like the coughing of a cat.

"Becky—it—it's all what I—I—I could do! It'n—it—"

She dragged her trembling limbs across the room to his side. She held him to her so close that the showy lace yoke transferred its imprint from her bosom to the flesh of his cheek. She could feel his sobs of hysteria beating against her breast, and her own tears flowed.

They racked her like a storm tearing on the mad wings of a gale; they scalded down her cheeks into the furrows of her neck. She held him tight in the madness of panic and exultation, and his arm crept round her wide waist and his tired head relaxed to her breast; her hands locked tight about him and would not let him go.

"We—we're going home, Julius! We—we're going home!"

"Ya, ya, Becky! It'n—it's all right. Ya, ya, Becky!"



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